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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to determine the influence of selected characteristics, family patterns, economic standards and clothing problems of the low-income homemakers in Macon County on their participation in a clothing construction workshop. Changes in homemakers' sewing skills brought about by attendance at the workshop were also determined. Data were collected by means of two questionnaires and through personal group interviews. A contingency Table Analysis Program was used to analyze data. Findings include: (1) Participation in the workshop was not influenced by the personal characteristics of the homemakers; (2) Participation was influenced by the sources of homemaking information used, homemakers' knowledge and involvement in community organizations, and ownership of sewing equipment; and (3) Low-income homemakers participating in the workshop make a significant improvement in clothing construction skills. (Author/CK)

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RESEARCH SUMMA LTURAL EXTENSION

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A Research Summary of a Graduate Study

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARTICIPATION IN A CLOTHING CONSTRUCTION WORKSHOP AND SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS AND SEWING SKILLS OF LOW-INCOME HOMEMAKERS IN MACON COUNTY, TENNESSEE

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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARTICIPATION IN A CLOTHING CONSTRUCTION WORKSHOP AND SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS AND SEWING SKILLS OF LOW-INCOME HOMEMAKERS IN MACON COUNTY, TENNESSEE

by

Madeline L. Henry

ABSTRACT

The major purpose of this study was to determine the influence of selected characteristics, family patterns, economic standards and clothing problems of the low-income homemakers in Macon County on their participation in a clothing construction workshop. Another purpose was to determine changes in homemakers' sewing skills brought about by attendance at a clothing construction workshop.

One hundred low-income homemakers were studied. Fifty participated in a clothing construction workshop. The remaining 50 were selected at random from a list of low-income homemakers, who were not participants in the workshop and were used as a comparison group.

Two questionnaires were used to secure data. One questionnaire was designed to secure information concerning personal, family and other characteristics of low-income homemakers which were thought to influence homemakers' participation in the workshop. This information was secured through personal and group interviews.

The other data collection instrument was designed to determine the degree to which low-income homemakers were able to perform 15 selected sewing skills. Each homemaker completed this checklist before and after the workshop.

Overall Economic Opportunity Homemaker Aids helped the Extension Home Agent in securing data. They also provided transportation for low-income homemakers to attend the clothing construction workshop.

A contingency Table Analysis Program was used to analyze data. This program computed percentages, chi square values and degree of freedom. Chi square values which achieved the .05 level were accepted as significant. A "t" test was used to determine significance of differences in pre-test and post-test scores on clothing construction skills.

Major findings of the study were as follows:

1. Participation in the workshop was not influenced by the personal characteristics (martial status, age, education, family income, husbands' occupation, place of residence and number of children) of the homemakers, except type of work performed by the homemakers. Homemakers who worked in a factory tended not to attend the workshop.

2. Participation in the workshop was influenced by the sources of homemaking information used by the homemakers. Participants in the workshop tended to be those who had previously secured homemaking information from either the Extension Service or the Office of Economic Opportunity. Non-participants relied primarily upon the Health Department for homemaking information.

3. Participation in the workshop was influenced by homemakers' knowledge of and involvement in community organizations and in events and activities. Workshop participants were more active than nonparticipants in church work, work of the Office of Economic Opportunity and Home Demonstration Clubs and other community programs.

4. Ownership of sewing equipment had a significant influence on low-income homemakers' participation in a clothing construction workshop. Those homemakers participating owned more pieces of sewing equipment, including sewing machines, than did the nonparticipants.

5. The skills checklist revealed that low-income homemakers participating in the workshop made a significant improvement (post-test over pre-test) in test scores on the 15 clothing construction skills. There was no significant differences in pre-test and post-test scores by homemakers who did not attend the workshop.

Implications and recommendations also were made.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARTICIPATION IN A CLOTHING CONSTRUCTION WORKSHOP AND SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS AND SEWING SKILLS OF LOW-INCOME HOMEMAKERS IN MACON COUNTY, TENNESSEE

A RESEARCH SUMMARY*

I. PURPOSE AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

Purpose

The major purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between low-income homemakers' participation in a clothing construction workshop and their personal characteristics, family patterns, economic standards and clothing problems. Another purpose was to determine changes in homemakers' sewing skills as a result of participation in the clothing construction workshop. It was believed that this information would help Extension Home Agents plan programs better suited to the needs and abilities of low-income homemakers.

Specific Objectives

Specific objectives of the study were as follows:

1. To determine the influence of selected personal family and other characteristics of low-income homemakers on their participation in a clothing construction workshop.

2. To determine changes in low-income homemakers' sewing skills brought about by participation in a clothing construction workshop.

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II. METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

Population and Sample

The population included 256 low-income homemakers living in Macon County, Tennessee. Data were secured from 100 of these low-income homemakers. Fifty of these were low-income homemakers who attended a clothing construction workshop. The comparison group consisted of 50 low-income homemakers who were invited to participate in the workshop but chose not to do so (nonparticipants).

Collection of Data

Two interview schedules were used to collect data. One was designed to secure information concerning personal, family and other characteristics of low-income homemakers which were thought to influence the homemakers' participation in the workshop. This information was secured through either personal or group interviews.

The other data collection instrument was designed to determine the degree to which low-income homemakers were able to perform 15 selected sewing skills. Both a pre-test and a post-test were completed by workshop participants and nonparticipants. Pre-tests were completed prior to the workshop and post-tests were completed following the workshop. Scores on pre- and post-tests were computed using the following scale to arrive at a score on homemakers ability to perform each of the 15 skills: Homemakers who felt unable to perform the skill did not receive any points for that skill; homemakers who felt that they could perform the skill, but not very well, received a score of one for that skill; homemakers who felt they could perform the skill adequately (very well) received two points for the skill. Scores on each of the 15 skills were summed to arrive at the homemakers' total score.

Analysis of Data

The completed interview schedules were coded and responses recorded on data sheets. Data were punched on data processing cards. Twenty-seven independent variables were identified and used in the analysis. Computations were made by The University of Tennessee computing center. A contingency table analysis program was used. This program computed percentages, chi square values and degrees of freedom. Chi square values which achieved the .05 level were accepted as significant.

III. SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

Major findings were classified and presented under headings relating the objectives of the study.

Relationship Between Low-income Homemakers' Participation in a Clothing Construction Workshop and Personal Characteristics (See Appendix C, Table I)

Low-income homemakers' workshop participation was not significantly influenced by the following personal characteristics: (1) marital status, (2) age of homemaker, (3) educational level, (4) monthly family income, (5) husbands' occupation, (6) outside source of income, (7) employment of homemaker, (8) home ownership, (9) place of residence, (10) number of children, and (11) number of children living at home.

Participation in the clothing construction workshop was significantly influenced by the type of work done by the homemaker. Homemakers who worked in a factory tended not to attend the workshop.

Relationship Between Low-income Homemakers' Workshop Participation and Sources of Information

1. Low-income homemakers' workshop participation was not significantly influenced by the availability of mass media (radio, television, magazines and newspapers) in the home.

2. Low-income homemakers' workshop participation was significantly influenced by the educational agency (Home Agent, O.E.O., Health Department) used as a source of homemaking information. Nonparticipants in the workshop relied upon the Health Office for this type of information.

3. Low-income homemakers' participation in a clothing construction workshop was significantly influenced by the source of information they considered most helpful. Participants felt that Home Demonstration Clubs provided the most helpful information. Nonparticipants considered mass media as their most helpful source of homemaking information.

Relationship Between Low-income Homemakers' Workshop Participation and Membership in Organizations, Activities and Events (See Appendix C, Table I)

1. Low-income homemakers' workshop participation was significantly influenced by their participation in community activities. The workshop participants were more active than nonparticipants in church, O.E.O., community programs and also discussed home improvement with others and had friends in H. D. C.

2. Low-income homemakers' workshop participation was significantly influenced by their knowledge of the Extension Office. A greater proportion of participants than of nonparticipants knew where the office was located and had visited the Extension Office.

3. Low-income homemakers' workshop participation was not significantly influenced by their having been 4-H members or by having children who were members.

4. Low-income homemakers' workshop participants considered the Homemaker Aide as the most helpful person and the Extension Home Agent as the second most helpful. Nonparticipants considered their neighbor as the person providing most helpful homemaking information.

Relationship Between Homemakers' Workshop Participation and Availability of Sewing Equipment and Homemakers' Perception as to Their Sewing Skills (See Appendix C, Table I)

1. Low-income homemakers' workshop participation was significantly influenced by ownership of a sewing machine. More participants than non-participants owned machines.

2. Low-income homemakers' workshop participation was significantly influenced by ownership of small sewing equipment. Participants in the workshop owned a larger number of small sewing items than did nonparticipants.

3. Low-income homemakers' workshop participation was not significantly influenced by their own perceptions of their sewing skills. Both groups felt their sewing skills were not very well developed.

4. Low-income homemakers' workshop participation was significantly influenced by having previously sewn items of clothing. Participants tended to be those who had previously sewn fabric items.

5. Low-income homemakers' workshop participation was significantly influenced by their desire to improve sewing skills. Although both groups had a desire to improve their sewing skills, a greater proportion of workshop participants than of nonparticipants indicated a desire to improve.

6. Low-income homemakers' workshop participation was significantly influenced by amount of money spent on themselves for clothing. Participants spent more money on themselves for clothing than did nonparticipants.

7. Low-income homemakers' workshop participation was significantly influenced by the amount of money the family spent on clothing. Participants' family spent more money for clothing than did nonparticipants.

Relationship Between Homemakers' Participation and Improvement in Sewing Skills (See Appendix C, Table II)

Pre-test scores on low-income homemakers' ability to perform each of 15 sewing skills were the same for workshop participants and nonparticipants. Nonparticipants' increase in scores (post-test over pre-test) was 0.09 (from .72 to .81) compared to an increase of .41 (from .72 to 1.13) by workshop participants.

The "t" test of significance showed that differences in pre-test and post-test scores made by homemakers on the 15 skills did achieve the .001 level of significance. Nonparticipants' scores on the 15 skills (pre-test and post-test) did not differ significantly. Homemakers who participated in the workshop did improve their clothing construction skills.

Implications and recommendations were also included in the study.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX C

TABLE I

SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS AND NONPARTICIPANTS IN A CLOTHING CONSTRUCTION WORKSHOP FOR LOW-INCOME HOMEMAKERS IN MACON COUNTY, TENNESSEE

Homemakers' Personal and Family Characteristics	Workshop Participation	
	Participants (N=50)	Nonparticipants (N=50)
	--------- Percents ----------	
Marital Status[b]		
Married	58	52
Divorced	8	2
Widowed	26	30
Single	8	16
	100	100
Age of Homemakers[b]		
Under 45	32	20
45-54	18	24
55-64	22	22
65 and over	28	34
	100	100
Educational Level[b]		
Under Grade 5	28	26
Grades 5 - 8	50	66
Grades 9 - 10	6	2
Grades 11 and over	16	6
	100	100
Average Grade	7.1	6.6
Family Income/Month[b]		
Under $100	38	36
$100 - 199	34	36
$200 - 299	14	16
$300 - over	4	10
No response	10	2
	100	100
Average Income	$153	$172
Husbands' Occupation[b]		
No husband	40	48
Farmer	10	8
Laborer	22	16
Professional	4	0
Not employed	24	28
	100	100

[a] $p < .05$ (Significant at .05 level)

[b] $p > .05$ (Not significant at .05 level)

TABLE I, Continued.

Homemakers' Personal and Family Characteristics	Workshop Participation: Participants (N=50)	Workshop Participation: Nonparticipants (N=50)
	Percents	
Other Sources of Income[a]		
None	36	28
Social Security	30	36
Welfare	14	22
Pension	4	6
Other	16	8
	100	100
Employment of Homemaker[b]		
Full-time	10	12
Part-time	2	2
Not employed	88	86
	100	100
Type of Work[a]		
Not employed	88	86
Factory	2	10
O.E.O. Center	6	0
Other	4	4
	100	100
Home Ownership[b]		
Rent	42	28
Own	58	66
Other	0	6
	100	100
Place of Residence[b]		
Farm	38	28
Rural Non-farm	28	30
Urban	32	28
No response	2	4
	100	100
Number of Children[b]		
Not any	16	34
1 - 4	52	40
5 or more	32	26
	100	100
Average Number	3.22	2.48
Number of Children at Home[b]		
Not any	42	58
1 - 4	50	36
5 or more	8	6
	100	100

[a] $p < .05$ (Significant at .05 level)

[b] $p > .05$ (Not significant at .05 level)

TABLE I, Continued.

Homemakers' Personal and Family Characteristics	Workshop Participation: Participants (N=50)	Workshop Participation: Nonparticipants (N=50)
	Percents	
Sources of Homemaking Information		
Have radio[b]	88	92
Have television[b]	90	92
Have magazines[b]	10	12
Have newspaper[b]	22	18
From O.E.O.[b]	98	96
From Health Office[a]	36	70
From Home Agent[b]	94	98
Most Helpful Sources of Information[a]		
Radio	20	38
Television	30	46
Extension publications	10	10
Other publications	4	0
Home Demonstration Club	32	2
Other	4	4
	100	100
Participation in Other Organizations and Activities		
Attend church regularly[b]	88	68
Visit O.E.O. Center regularly[a]	90	32
Other[b]	66	50
Have friends in Home Demonstration Club[a]	92	60
Knowledge of Extension		
Had visited Extension Office[a]	42	4
Knew location of Extension Office[a]	92	64
Four-H Participation		
Was a 4-H member[b]	22	76
Had children in 4-H[b]	26	24
Children had been in 4-H[b]	48	52
Persons Most Helpful[a]		
Neighbor	4	40
Home Agent	42	20
Welfare Agent	0	2
Home Economics Teacher	2	4
Health Department Representative	0	2
Homemakers Aid (O.E.O.)	50	30
Other	2	2
	100	100

[a] $p < .05$ (Significant at .05 level)

[b] $p > .05$ (Not significant at .05 level)

TABLE I, Continued.

Homemakers' Personal and Family Characteristics	Workshop Participation: Participants (N=50)	Workshop Participation: Nonparticipants (N=50)
	Percents	
Own Sewing Machine[b]		
Electric	50	32
Manual	12	28
Do not own	38	40
	100	100
Own Small Sewing Equipment[a]		
Not any	0	4
1 - 2 items	18	30
3 - 4 items	14	32
5 or more items	68	34
	100	100
Perception of Sewing Skills[b]		
Never used a machine	16	24
Used machine very little	40	38
Use machine not very well	34	24
Use machine very well	10	10
No response	0	4
	100	100
Fabric Items Have Sewn		
Clothing[a]	76	54
Household items[b]	76	62
Desire to Improve Sewing Skill[a]		
Yes	98	76
No	2	20
No response	0	4
	100	100
Money Spent on Clothing for Self Last 6 Months[a]		
Not any	18	32
$1 - $10	58	50
$11 - $25	16	18
$26 and over	8	0
	100	100
Money Spent on Clothing for Family Past 6 Months[a]		
Not any	12	30
$1 - $25	64	66
$26 - $50	12	4
$51 and over	12	0
	100	100

[a] $p < .05$ (Significant at .05 level)

[b] $p > .05$ (Not significant at .05 level)

TABLE II

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HOMEMAKERS' PARTICIPATION IN A CLOTHING CONSTRUCTION WORKSHOP AND IMPROVEMENT IN SEWING TASKS OR SKILLS

Sewing Task or Skill	Mean Scores*					
	Workshop Participants**			Nonparticipants***		
	Pre-Test (N = 50)	Post-Test (N = 50)	Increase	Pre-Test (N = 50)	Post-Test (N = 50)	Increase
1. Use a Pattern	.76	1.34	.58	.70	.76	.06
2. Determine Size Pattern	.66	.98	.32	.66	.68	.02
3. Take Body Measurements	.76	1.34	.58	.70	.76	.06
4. Alter Pattern	.26	.44	.18	.48	.44	-.04
5. Straighten Fabric	.94	1.52	.58	.94	.98	.04
6. Mark Curved Areas	.70	1.16	.46	.76	.78	.02
7. Staystitch edges	.54	.90	.36	.54	.54	.00
8. Use Interfacing	.54	.72	.18	.52	.50	-.02
9. Make Darts	.96	1.40	.44	.90	.90	.00
10. Trim Seams	.72	1.00	.28	.84	.86	.02

TABLE II (continued)

Sewing Task or Skill	Mean Scores* Workshop Participants** Pre-Test (N = 50)	Post-Test (N = 50)	Increase	Nonparticipants*** Pre-Test (N = 50)	Post-Test (N = 50)	Increase
11. Finish Edges of Facings	.72	.94	.22	.80	.78	-.02
12. Use Pressing Equipment	.50	.98	.48	.76	.80	.04
13. Prevent Gathers in Sleeves	.76	1.20	.44	.82	.82	.00
14. Understitch	.54	1.38	.84	.66	1.24	.58
15. Put in Hem	1.38	1.72	.34	1.24	1.24	.00
Average Score	.72	1.13	.41	.72	.81	.09

*Skill competency scores ranged from 0 to 2 (0 = Unable to perform the skill; 1 = Could perform the skill to some extent but "not very well"; 2 = Could perform the skill adequately or very well).

**Statistical test of significance (t test) showed that homemakers attending the workshop made a significant improvement in test scores (post-test over pre-test) on the 15 sewing skills, $P \leq .001$.

***Homemakers who did not attend the workshop did not show a significant improvement in test scores (post-test over pre-test) on the 15 sewing skills. However, a very slight improvement in test score was noted.

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